

Summary Minutes

Alexandria Waterfront Committee Meeting September 21, 2010

Lee Center Gold Room

Members

Present: Engin Artemel
Jay Atkinson
Christine Bernstein
Mel Fortney
Linda Hafer
Nathan Macek
Jody Manor
Peter Pennington
Pete Peterson
Robert Taylor
Van Van Fleet

Excused: Doug Gosnell
Charlotte Hall

Absent: William Cromley
Paul Smedberg

City Staff: Jeff Ash, Police Department
Roger Blakeley, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Laura Seidler, RPCA
Nancy Williams, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)

Guests: Brian Buzzell
Susan Cohen
Harry Harrington
Joanne Platt
Sarita Schotta

Welcome and Introductions

Committee members and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Pennington, second by Hafer to approve the June minutes as drafted.
Motion carried on a voice vote.

Officer Elections

Moved by Artemel, second by Van Fleet, to nominate Pennington to serve as Vice Chair. Pennington accepted the nomination and was unanimously elected Vice Chair on a voice vote.

There were several nominations for Secretary, but all were declined. Macek said that secretary elections would remain on the Committee's agenda until the office was filled.

Report from Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Activities

Marina Dockmaster Hut Update

Blakeley and Seidler provided an update on the replacement of the Dockmaster Hut, which will cause \$50,000 to \$100,000 to fix or replace due to mold infestation. Options include tearing down and rebuilding or buying or leasing a houseboat style dockmaster hut.

Micoburst Storm Damage

Waterfront parks sustained significant tree damage as a result of the August microburst storm. The RPCA is requesting additional funds for tree planting to replace the damaged tree canopy. A lot of lessons learned from responding to the February snow storms were applied by the City to respond to the microburst storm.

Moved by Artemel, second by Bernstein to thank RPCA staff for its role in cleaning up parks following microburst storm. Macek offered to follow up with a letter expressing the Committee's sentiments. Pennington urged the letter to also address recovery of lost tree canopy.

A "recovery day" volunteer event for tree replanting was planned for Founders Park in October. Macek asked how trees would be replaced in other parks, since only Founders has its own community association. Blakeley offered to present an update on tree plantings at the October Committee meeting.

Other Items

Blakeley reported that Jamestown Settlement planned to dock its replica tall ship Godspeed at Alexandria in October 2011. More information would be provided to the Committee as plans develop.

The City was obtaining permits to replace pilings north of the water taxi dock. The pilings had been damaged in part after being hit by the water taxis. The area had been the site of the largest number of boating accidents at the marina, and was closed to pleasure boats after the water taxi began operation.

RPCA staff provided a written update on activities at Jones Point Park. Blakeley noted that the National Park Service's George Washington Memorial Parkway unit would be responsible for operation of the park after January 1, 2011.

Report from Department of Planning and Zoning

Williams provided an update on the Waterfront Plan. A written report on the Waterfront Concept Plan was released in July. She noted that met with Macek in August to discuss the Waterfront Committee's comments.

General comments received to date included the following:

- The plan must address traffic and parking, and a multimodal approach to transportation at the Waterfront is desired
- The potential for Waterfront development is limited, and must be dynamic but balanced, with minimal impact on the community
- Architecture must be harmonious with existing buildings and historic structures should be preserved
- History and art woven must be incorporated into the development program and park design
- Existing non-profit stakeholders and public service groups (police, fire) must be accommodated
- A mechanism for funding improvements must be in place
- Environmental and marina issues were of importance

Williams anticipated the release of the Waterfront Small Area Plan in the fall, with review by the Planning Commission and City Council in the winter.

She said staff was completing the marina design and would be meeting with officials from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and the District of Columbia Department of Environment regarding marina jurisdictional issues.

She said the Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group recommendations had implications for the Waterfront Plan. The Work Group's recommendations had been finalized and would go to the City Council in October.

P&Z planned to host Waterfront Plan community meetings in October regarding parking and funding/financing, prior to releasing the draft Small Area Plan. Williams said that a public meeting would be held when the draft plan is released, which would be followed by a 30-day comment period and public hearing. She said that staff would aim for a full presentation to the Waterfront Committee in November.

Pennington raised the issue of jurisdiction over the City's marina. He proposed to invite the City Attorney to a Committee meeting to discuss jurisdiction issues. He suggested that this could culminate in a recommendation by the Committee to the City to sort out jurisdictional issues along the Waterfront. Macek said he would follow-up with the City Attorney's office.

Adoption of Annual Report

Moved by Fortney, second by Artemel, to approve the Waterfront Committee FY10 Annual Report as drafted. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Adoption of Annual Meeting Schedule

Moved by Bernstein, second by Pennington, to approve the Waterfront Committee FY11 Meeting Schedule as drafted. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Committee will meet on the third Tuesday of each month September through June, including a full meeting in June in addition to the Waterfront Walk.

Discussion: City Budget Recommendations

After a brief discussion, the Committee resolved to fully discuss budget recommendations in October. Macek noted the importance of providing input to the City budget process early, before key decisions were made. RPCA staff would provide a summary of the FY11 operating budget and CIP adopted by Council last year, as background information for the Committee.

Van Fleet said it was incumbent on the Committee to tell Council that it needed to invest in infrastructure first, such as sewer upgrades and failing bulkheads.

Announcements

Macek announced several upcoming park clean-ups scheduled for Founders and Oronoco Bay parks.

Taylor announced the upcoming Alexandria Seaport Day celebration.

Adjournment

Hafer moved to adjourn, Bernstein seconded. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:13 a.m.